

Girl Scouts. It was while she was a Girl Scout at the age of 12 that she became involved in activities with the local Sunshine Camp for the Blind. From there she began teaching songs to the blind, piano to younger children, and became a summer camp counselor and taught horseback riding lessons.

Martha married right out of college, and she and her husband recently celebrated their 44th wedding anniversary. They have two married children and three grandchildren. Moving to Georgia in 1975, as the children grew, she became so very involved in our community.

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She has been involved with the Athens Area Association for Retarded Citizens, the Oconee Lions Club, Athens Evening Kiwanis Club, Oconee Optimist Club, the Oconee Pilot Club, and was a Special Olympics coach for over 12 years.

She has served on the board of directors for Sandy Creek Nature Center, First Night Athens, and Project R.E.A.C.H. She has also served Oconee County on the Citizens Advisory Committee on Cultural and Recreational Affairs.

Along with her fine husband, Peter, they have been major benefactors for numerous organizations, projects, and community groups such as the Athens Symphony and the Oconee County Public Library.

In 2003, the Oconee Rotary Club awarded Martha with the Jean Harris Award, given each year to a non-Rotarian woman in recognition of significant contributions given to the community over and above the call of duty.

Although these accomplishments and involvements are numerous and impressive, perhaps the most important contribution was the founding of Extra Special People, known as ESP. Martha Wyllie has put her energy, her love, and her financial resources into this program since its founding in 1986. For over 18 years, ESP has been providing a summer camp for youth and young adults ages 5 to 17 with different abilities. ESP camp provides a normal camping atmosphere for these young people.

Martha and her staff realize that these children wish to participate in the normal experiences of growing, and the ESP philosophy allows them to take part in regular camping activities while still meeting their individual needs.

Ms. Martha Wyllie, a tireless advocate who is the true definition of a good public servant, spends most of her waking hours helping everyone she touches to understand and to lend a hand to these very extra special people; and, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to share this woman with our colleagues.

THOSE WHO HAVE BORNE THE BATTLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Under a pre-

vious order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, 2 days ago the United States military announced that 1,000 military personnel have been killed in Iraq. For every American this is a time to contemplate the totality of the sacrifice of these brave Americans.

I recently returned from my second visit to our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. I was awed by the courage, determination, and dedication of our troops who are fighting a brutal enemy thousands of miles from home.

Our soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen, and coast guard are doing their job magnificently; but as we continue to battle a stubborn and pernicious insurgency in Iraq, Congress must take stock of the needs of our troops in battle and the challenges they will face when they come home.

We owe it to the more than 1,000 Americans who have died in Iraq and to their comrades serving there still to ensure that we put Iraq on the road to democracy and that we assist the Iraqi Government in building the security forces, army and police, that it needs to defend itself.

Since I was first in Iraq, the political transition has made important strides, but the security situation has worsened considerably; and our troops are shouldering an incredible load for the rest of us.

A year ago, the insurgency appeared confined to a few hundred Baathists, Saddam Fedeyeen, a small contingent of foreign fighters, and criminals released by Hussein before the war. Regrettably, the insurgency has spread, fueled by a much more substantial influx of foreign fighters and made more complex by Shiite uprisings in what had been more tranquil parts of the country.

The insurgents have embraced the tactics of foreign fighters. Suicide bombings and kidnappings have become much more sophisticated. Improvised explosive devices, IEDs, which take a daily toll on our troops, used to be easily visible to American personnel as they drove through the country. Now, they are buried, with only a slender wire of an antenna protruding above the ground and detonated remotely. Clearly our forces face a determined foe.

There is no question that the burden of this war has fallen exclusively on the shoulders of our men and women in uniform. While the military may always bear a disproportionate share of the burden in wartime, it is especially acute now. Even as our Guard and Reserve are constantly being called up and our active duty forces are stretched thin, the general population has been asked to make no sacrifice for a war effort that we are financing through debt.

Our troops are paying doubly for this war, first on the battlefield and then in the form of crushing deficits that have fundamentally weakened our economy.

Some only barely out of their teens, our troops will be paying for this war for the rest of their lives, even if they return home uninjured. They will pay for it in the form of higher mortgages on their first home, on credit card debt, and in taxes to repay the national debt.

Even as we speak, the families of our troops are struggling, losing jobs, businesses and piling up debt. I met a young Marine from my district in Pasadena who had been serving in Iraq since February and was due to return in the fall, return home. He had just learned that his wife had been called up and that she will be deployed to Iraq in the fall. Their planes may literally pass each other in the night.

We must not forget the nearly 7,000 Americans who have been wounded, more than 1,000 in the last month alone. Many of these wounds are grievous and many others might have been prevented had our troops been better equipped from the start of the war. Our troops now have the body armor they need and are driving armored Humvees, but they should never have gone into battle without these life-saving protections.

In an American military hospital in Baghdad, I spoke with several Marines hit with IEDs. Two Marines, who lay side by side in adjoining hospital beds, were riding in the same armored Humvee when they were struck. While these two Marines had shrapnel embedded in their legs and faces, a third Marine in the same Humvee was lucky and walked away unharmed. A fourth Marine they told me had not been so lucky. He died on the operating table the night before.

These young men and women and nearly 7,000 other wounded are returning to a Congress that seems to have forgotten Abraham Lincoln's admonition "to care for him who has borne the battle." We provide insufficient medical care for our veterans, and VA centers around the country are closing their doors, even as they are needed more than ever.

In our towns, cities and counties, thousands of individual Americans have pitched in to help our returning soldiers, but our Federal Government has lagged far behind. Until recently, our wounded were charged for the food they ate while recovering at Walter Reed Army Hospital.

I realize that time is short in this Congress, but I hope when we consider the VA-HUD appropriations bill later this month and in our work on defense and veterans issues in the 109th Congress that we consider the extraordinary price that we as a Nation have asked of the men and women of our Armed Forces and that we match our words with deeds.

INCREASE IN THE MONTHLY MEDICARE PART B PREMIUM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KING of Iowa). Under a previous order